



## Identifying, Importing, and Exporting Organic Products

### Organic Products

Although the requirements vary by country, all products labeled as "organic" have been certified as having been produced through clearly defined organic production methods. More info: [www.ams.usda.gov/nop](http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop)

### Organic Certification

To verify that the production process conforms to certain standards, all organic products must obtain organic certification. The USDA National Organic Program, the federal regulatory body for U.S. organic products, has 55 domestic and 42 foreign accredited certifying agents: [www.ams.usda.gov/NOPACAs](http://www.ams.usda.gov/NOPACAs).

### Identifying Organic Products

If the USDA Organic or Canadian Organic logos are displayed on the exterior of the shipping box, the contained product is organic. If there is no obvious identification, the shipper should inspect the required accompanying documentation for imported and exported products for verification:

- Receipt (bill of lading) detailing receipt of goods described as organic and specifying terms of delivery
- Commercial invoice representing a complete record of the business transaction
- Organic transaction certificate (required for export to certain countries as detailed below)

Guidance for product labeling and proper documentations for trade with specific nations is provided below.

### Canada

*Import & Export.* The U.S. has an equivalence arrangement with Canada, meaning that organic operations certified to the USDA National Organic Program (NOP) or Canada Organic Product Regulation (COPR) standards may be labeled and sold as organic in the United States and Canada. Specific critical variances within the arrangement require attestations to demonstrate compliance to the terms of the equivalency arrangement. Product labels or stickers must state the name of the U.S. or Canadian certifying agent and may use the USDA Organic seal and the Canada Organic Biologique logos.

### New Zealand, India, United Kingdom, Japan, Israel, & Denmark

*Import.* The U.S. has Recognition Agreements with these six nations, which allows their governments to accredit certifying agents in their country. These foreign certifying agents have the authority to certify organic operations in their country to the USDA Organic standards. Imported organic products' labels or stickers from these countries must state the name of the certifying agent and may use the USDA Organic seal.

### Japan & Taiwan

*Export.* The U.S. has export arrangements with Japan and Taiwan. USDA Organic products exported to these nations must be accompanied by an organic transaction certificate (TM-11) that verifies that the product complies with the terms of the export arrangements. A list of certifying agents approved to issue TM-11 export certificates is available at <http://bit.ly/tm11acas>.

## European Union

Organic products exported to the European Union must be certified in accordance with the European organic standards. Some U.S. certifying agents have programs that provide certification to the European organic standards. U.S. organic products exported to the European Union must be accompanied by an organic import certificate. More information concerning exports to the European Union may be found at [http://bit.ly/european\\_organic](http://bit.ly/european_organic).

## Foreign Nations with USDA Organic Certifying Agents

*Import.* Currently, certifying agents directly accredited by NOP are located in over 20 countries. Some of these certifying agents provide certification to the NOP regulations in many other countries besides where their home office is located. Imported USDA organic products' labels or stickers must state the name of the certifying agent and may use the USDA Organic seal. A list of certifying agents is available at [www.ams.usda.gov/NOPACAs](http://www.ams.usda.gov/NOPACAs).

## Organic Seals



USDA Organic Seal (U.S.)



European Organic Food Label (E.U.)  
(Exports only)



Canadian Organic Seal (Canada)

**I**n addition to the above requirements, which are specific to organic products, organic fruit and vegetables destined for export should meet the usual requirements concerning all fresh fruit and vegetables. The following brief summary is not intended to be a comprehensive account of export requirements. For more detailed information, please contact the importers and customs services in the country of destination.

## Schedule B Codes & Tracking Systems

In January, 2011, Schedule B codes were established for organic products to facilitate tracking of imported and exported organic products throughout the world. Schedule B codes ([www.usitc.gov/tata/hts/bychapter](http://www.usitc.gov/tata/hts/bychapter)) are required when submitting either the electronic Automated Export System (AES) or paper Shipper's Export Declarations (SED) versions of export shipment data. AES information: [www.aesdirect.gov](http://www.aesdirect.gov)

## Phytosanitary certification

A phytosanitary certificate is required to be issued by the U.S. Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) to ensure that the product is healthy and free from pests requiring quarantine.

## Grade and quality standards

Exported fruits and vegetables are often required to meet import requirements related to the size, grade, quality and maturity. USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service is able to inspect and certify these products.

## Pesticides and other Contaminants

As organic agriculture prohibits the use of most synthetic pesticides, organic products are unlikely to exceed maximum residue levels in the country of destination. However, those producers who use some of the few synthetic inputs permitted by organic standards should be aware of these requirements.